

# BIG BASIN REDWOODS STATE PARK


## Preferred Alternative

February 22, 2011

**Preferred Alternative:** Emphasis is on preserving the prime natural and cultural features, while maintaining traditional park activities and programs. New development will be located outside the old growth forest and concentrated in the Little Basin and Saddle Mountain areas. More detailed guidelines will be included in the Preliminary General Plan – Draft Program EIR document.

### Overall Assumptions:

- All special status species and habitats, including old growth redwoods, will be protected and managed as required by state and federal regulations.
- All treatments to potentially eligible historic buildings, structures, and landscapes will follow the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- Reference to the Little Basin property is included in this planning alternative for consideration if acquired as an addition to Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

ZONE	INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION	RECREATION & PARK FACILITIES	NATURAL RESOURCES	CULTURAL RESOURCES
<h2>Park Overview</h2> <p>As California's first state park, Big Basin's unique legacy is in preserving central California coast old growth redwoods; its influence on the American Conservation Movement; and in establishing state park system traditions.</p> 	<p><b>Interpretive Themes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Redwood Park Preservation and American Conservation Movement</li> <li>▪ Governor's Camp: 1904 – 40s</li> <li>▪ Big Basin Recreation Through the Years</li> <li>▪ Big Basin Recreational Resources</li> <li>▪ Physical Forces and Natural Communities</li> <li>▪ Redwoods</li> <li>▪ Marbled Murrelets</li> <li>▪ Hoover Family</li> <li>▪ Native California Indians</li> <li>▪ Portolá Expedition</li> <li>▪ Lumber, Tanbark, and Early Settlement</li> <li>▪ Big Basin Workers</li> <li>▪ The Civilian Conservation Corps California</li> <li>▪ Grizzly Bears</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare an Interpretation Master Plan to provide further parkwide guidance and recommendations.</li> <li>▪ Use interpretive media and programs to increase the public's awareness of the park's diversity and opportunities. Connect visitors with the natural world, cultural history and varied outdoor recreational activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase public access and recreation opportunities and provide additional park facilities where appropriate outside the old growth forests.</li> <li>▪ Enhance visitor experiences to meet changing conditions and recreational trends.</li> <li>▪ Rehabilitate historic buildings and structures for appropriate adaptive uses that remain compatible with historic usage and resource management objectives.</li> <li>▪ Improve trail connections for multi-use between destination areas and points of interest within the park.</li> <li>▪ Improve the park's setting and overall visitor experience in the historic core by reducing vehicle traffic and high intensity uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preserve coastal redwood forests, natural resources, and living systems.</li> <li>▪ Implement sustainable management practices to improve redwood forest health, such as prescribed fire and removal of invasive non-native plants.</li> <li>▪ Modify, relocate, or remove facilities and activities determined to have a significant adverse impact on the conditions and health of the redwood forest and associated habitats.</li> <li>▪ Monitor public use and develop effective management strategies to protect sensitive resources and avoid or reduce adverse impacts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preserve and interpret Big Basin's heritage, cultural traditions, and significant cultural resources.</li> <li>▪ Nominate original 3,800 acres as a National Historic Landmark and potentially eligible cultural resources to the National Register of Historic Places (currently underway).</li> <li>▪ Protect and interpret significant cultural sites and features, and preserve the integrity of historic buildings and structures through proper treatment and appropriate adaptive uses.</li> <li>▪ Preserve archeological sites and cultural landscape features.</li> </ul>

<b>Park Overview (continued)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attract and accommodate a more ethnically diverse audience with measures such as offering additional interpretive materials and exhibit translations in languages other than English.</li> <li>▪ Further community outreach to increase attendance, partnering with area ethnic organizations on special events or education programs, and publicizing park programs via media outlets that will reach more under-represented groups.</li> <li>▪ Integrate all interpretation planning with regional and statewide interpretation planning and development, both within California State Parks and with other local agencies.</li> <li>▪ Work closely with the park's cooperating associations and volunteers to improve park interpretive resources, programs, and opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that park facilities become universally-accessible and provide high-quality recreational opportunities for all visitors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement the Park's long-term programs for watershed management and habitat protection, including resource inventories, monitoring and impact assessment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide alternative trail access or boardwalks to avoid impacts to cultural sites and sensitive resource areas.</li> </ul>
<b>ZONE</b>	<b>INTERPRETATION &amp; EDUCATION</b>	<b>RECREATION &amp; PARK FACILITIES</b>	<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>
<b>Park Headquarters &amp; Sky Meadow</b>  Planning zone consists of: 1) The historic Headquarters core area; and  2) The park's developed campgrounds, maintenance center, and staff residence areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interpret the purpose and events surrounding the founding of the original California Redwood Park, and emphasize themes on early park recreation and facility development, interpretation, natural resource management and land use history.</li> <li>▪ Use interpretation to create links between past and present, develop cultural and natural history interpretation that uses a flow of history approach to examine how different groups of people have viewed and used the park area's natural resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rehabilitate historic buildings for appropriate adaptive uses to provide essential visitor services and support desired interpretive activities.</li> <li>▪ Rehabilitate the historic Lodge building for use as a multi-use facility for interpretation, concession and/or park operational purposes.</li> <li>▪ Improve wayfinding for visitors in the HQ area by opening up sight lines between buildings and designated use areas, consistent with the historic resources evaluations; establishing path connections between activity areas and improving information and directional signing to program areas and available services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preserve the old growth redwood forest and protect native plants and wildlife habitats.</li> <li>▪ Coordinate with DFG and USFWS toward the long-term recovery and survival of the Santa Cruz Mountain's marbled murrelet population.</li> <li>▪ Limit new facilities construction in the old growth redwoods and manage visitor activities to protect sensitive resources and achieve long-term management objectives.</li> <li>▪ Relocate some existing facilities, where necessary, to protect sensitive natural resources and significant cultural resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preserve and rehabilitate HQ historic buildings and cultural landscape elements, as appropriate. No new building construction in HQ area, except when rehabilitating an existing historic building for adaptive use, where appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Emphasize preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings and characteristics related to early park history. Where appropriate, consider returning building features (i.e. pergolas, signs, and fences) that once existed during the period of significance, in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.</li> </ul>



# Park Headquarters (HQ) & Sky Meadow (continued)



Park headquarters building

- Develop and implement a plan to maintain park archives and collections to department standards, in order to ensure that interpretation research and artifact resources are protected.
- Increase interpretive program activities to enhance visitor experiences and appreciation of Big Basin’s cultural history and traditions.



Park interpretive tour

- Establish the primary visitor contact and campground registration outside the HQ area, and relocate some park administrative functions to a new facility at Saddle Mountain. Retain traditional visitor information counter at the Park HQ building.
- Provide park shuttle and satellite parking areas to reduce HQ traffic congestion during peak use periods.
- Introduce up to 10 overnight cabins in the Sky Meadow area along the road to the existing group camps and outside sensitive resource areas. These cabins would require an expansion of parking and utilities infrastructure in order to provide seasonal accommodations for individual or group use.
- Make provisions for equestrian trailer parking and access to trails from locations outside the HQ historic core area. One possible site is located along Hwy 236 near East Ridge Road/trail.
- Explore State Scenic Highway and Federal Scenic Byway status for Highway 236
- Allow for development of additional trailer pads and amenities in the Sky Meadow residence area to serve future employee housing needs, while maintaining the historic integrity of this 1940s residence area.

- Protect sensitive aquatic species, including California red-legged frog and anadromous fish, and take appropriate measures to minimize disturbances in critical habitats during breeding and spawning seasons.
- Restore forest understory vegetation and reduce soil compaction, where possible, within developed public use areas.



Forest understory vegetation




- Complete resource evaluations and prepare cultural landscape report to guide the preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings and landscapes.





Lower Sky Meadow residence

- Protect and preserve historic residences and associated cultural landscape located in the Sky Meadow area.



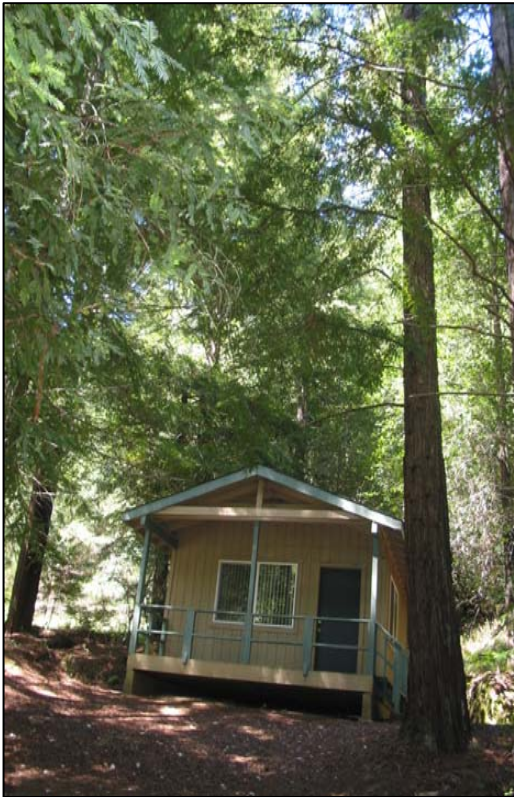
ZONE	INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION	RECREATION & PARK FACILITIES	NATURAL RESOURCES	CULTURAL RESOURCES
<div><h2>Saddle Mountain Property and Highway 236</h2><p>Highway 236 traverses through the park and provides vehicle access to Big Basin’s developed facilities from the Bay Area (north) and Boulder Creek and Santa Cruz (south).</p><p><i>Environmental education building</i></p><p>Saddle Mountain property is located at the park’s southern boundary, and is currently leased by a non-profit organization for an outdoor education program.</p></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Provide an overview of the park’s interpretive messages in the new welcome center, especially wayfinding and recreation, and information on where in the park they can learn more.</li><li>▪ Interpret the site’s history and important natural and cultural features through visitor programs and exhibits.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Develop a new park welcome center for primary visitor contact, park orientation and campground registration.</li><li>▪ Consider acquisition of additional properties if available from willing sellers, to accommodate facilities development, highway improvements, and to ensure long-term compatibility with adjacent land uses.</li><li>▪ Develop park shuttle/metro bus stop with a day use park and ride lot. Total parking capacity TBD based on Hwy 236 traffic analysis and projected visitor needs, economic feasibility, potential environmental impacts, and consideration for phased implementation.</li><li>▪ Consider provisions for equestrian trailhead parking and staging area at Saddle Mountain if sufficient area can be provided and trail connections can be made to accommodate this use.</li><li>▪ Develop multi-use trail connections between Saddle Mountain, Little Basin, and HQ area, where possible.</li><li>▪ Rehabilitate/restore historic Gatehouse on Hwy. 236 to serve as employee residence and/or park administrative adaptive uses.</li><li>▪ Coordinate with Caltrans to improve signage on Hwy 9 at Waterman Gap to redirect visitors to the park’s south entrance at Saddle Mountain.</li><li>▪ Develop trailhead parking and signage at locations along Hwy 236 at China Grade Road and south of Waterman Gap.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Evaluate and protect natural resource values in site planning and design of future park facilities development.</li><li>▪ Establish adequate vegetative screening and buffers between administrative and visitor activity areas, and between park development and adjacent land uses.</li><li>▪ Preserve and maintain the scenic quality of Hwy 236 and park entry experience.</li></ul>  <p><i>Saddle Mountain trail</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Conduct additional resource surveys to identify and evaluate the presence of prehistoric and historic features, and implement protective measures where necessary.</li></ul>  <p><i>Saddle Mtn. open space &amp; garden</i></p>

ZONE	INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION	RECREATION & PARK FACILITIES	NATURAL RESOURCES	CULTURAL RESOURCES
<div>Little Basin Property</div> <div></div> <div>Group picnic shelter</div> <div>Little Basin is a 535-acre private recreation development adjacent to Big Basin’s southern boundary.</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consider adding interpretive facilities and programs such as interpretive trails, panels, and Junior Rangers programs at Little Basin and in outlying areas as visitation levels warrant.</li><li>Work closely with the park’s cooperating associations and volunteers to improve park interpretive resources, programs, and opportunities.</li></ul></div> <div></div> <div>Stage platform in group picnic area</div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Acquire Little Basin property and establish a public recreation area for family and group use, and destination for special events. General Plan envisions the Little Basin property as having the greatest potential to expand Big Basin day use and overnight visitor accommodations, and also provide opportunities to serve evolving recreation trends.</li><li>Support activities, such as camping (including cabins), hiking, biking, horseback riding, fishing, interpretive and group activities. Consider program needs for possible environmental education center.</li><li>Retain and rehabilitate recreation facilities, including picnic areas, campsites, cabins, operations facilities and caretaker’s residence.</li><li>Consider a concession-developed and operated overnight lodge with dining facilities and additional rustic cabins.</li><li>Upgrade and/or modify the group picnic facilities and amphitheater in order to satisfy operational needs and meet ADA accessibility requirements.</li><li>Upgrade utility systems and infrastructure, as necessary, to accommodate family and group recreational use, and for special events with both outdoor and indoor facilities.</li><li>Coordinate with Santa Cruz County to manage public vehicle access on Little Basin Road from Hwy. 236 to the Little Basin property.</li><li>If feasible, provide park shuttle service for visitor travel between Little Basin, Saddle Mountain and Big Basin headquarters area. Utilize non-polluting electric or alternative fuel vehicles.</li></ul></div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Complete inventories and resource evaluations, and implement resource protection measures, where necessary.</li><li>Monitor public use and develop effective resource management policies and strategies to protect sensitive resources.</li><li>Remove or relocate existing facilities, as necessary, to preserve and protect sensitive natural resources.</li><li>Provide interpretation to educate and involve visitors in resource protection and restoration programs.</li></ul></div>	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Preserve, protect, and interpret significant cultural resources.</li><li>Interpret site history and use of Little Basin by Hewlett-Packard Company.</li></ul></div>



Little Basin Property  
(Continued)

Property was developed by Hewlett- Packard for large company picnics and camping. Currently owned by Sempervirens Fund and Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST).



Little Basin cabin

- Coordinate interpretive programs and facilities with other area interpretation providers and work with interested parties to continue and enrich outdoor environmental education opportunities.

- Maintain the unpaved road (Pine Mtn. Road) between Little Basin and Big Basin HQ area for a multi-use trail connection and for emergency vehicle use.

- Protect native plants, wildlife habitats, and mitigate impacts to allow for compatible public uses.






Little Basin campsite

- Remove or relocate existing modern facilities, as necessary, to preserve and protect significant cultural resources.



Indian bedrock mortar



ZONE	INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION	RECREATION & PARK FACILITIES	NATURAL RESOURCES	CULTURAL RESOURCES
<div><h2>Rancho del Oso &amp; Waddell Beach</h2></div> <div></div> <div><p><i>Mouth of Waddell Creek</i></p></div> <div><p>Rancho del Oso (RDO) consists of areas at the mouth of Waddell Creek, the T.J. Hoover Natural Preserve and Nature &amp; History Center on the inland side of Hwy. 1, and Waddell Beach on the coast side of Highway 1.</p><p>Open vistas of the ocean and Waddell Creek watershed are visible from Highway 1.</p></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Increase on-site interpretation, publications, and historical information available to visitors about RDO prehistory and history.</li><li>▪ Explore options to fund or share a permanent interpretive staff position at Rancho del Oso, in order to create more personnel stability for interpretation and docent program management.</li></ul> <div></div> <div><p><i>Natural resources interpretation</i></p></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Promote RDO as the western gateway to Big Basin and the West Waddell Creek State Wilderness, with a safe entry that is welcoming and conveys a sense of arrival and area identity.</li><li>▪ Coordinate with Caltrans to maintain and expand Waddell Beach parking facilities, as feasible, to support beach activities and ocean view parking. Consider asphalt paving and striping to improve parking and circulation efficiency.</li><li>▪ Improve highway signage and implement effective measures to slow vehicle traffic and provide early warning to motorists for approaching intersection and pedestrian crossing.</li><li>• Develop day use parking (approx. 50 spaces) on the inland side of Hwy 1. Provide review and input to Caltrans on their planning and design for the proposed Highway 1 bridge replacement at the mouth of Waddell Creek. Identify potential for day use parking and pedestrian underpass to the beach and safe vehicle access inland to the day use and campground facilities.</li><li>• Relocate the entrance gate to RDO further inland (approx. 200 ft east), and develop a vehicle turnaround, parking, and park information kiosk for visitors. Incorporate trail and camping information and interpretation on the area's history and significant natural and cultural resources.</li><li>▪ Upgrade or reconfigure the horse camp and equestrian staging facilities to improve campsites and trailer parking and vehicle circulation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Preserve the long-term health of the Waddell Creek watershed and coastal beach environment.</li><li>▪ Plan development to meet visitor needs and manage human activity to achieve objectives for resource management and protection, with continued use of the equestrian campground and trail access to inland areas.</li><li>▪ Coordinate with Caltrans on their Waddell Creek Bridge replacement project to improve hydrology processes and provide for coastal access and public safety.</li><li>▪ Protect habitat at the mouth of Waddell Creek, and implement best management practices that may include seasonal beach closures during snowy plover nesting periods.</li></ul> <div></div> <div><p><i>T. J. Hoover Natural Preserve</i></p></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Continue cultural resource surveys to identify and evaluate significant cultural resources, including archeological sites and features, buildings, structures and cultural landscape elements.</li></ul>

**Rancho del Oso & Waddell Beach (continued)**



RDO Entrance sign

- Support the continuance of the Nature and History Center facility and programs. Differentiate interpretation from that offered at the RDO ranger station/ interpretive facility. Focus interpretation at the Nature & History Ctr. on historical and ecological topics.
- Develop new bicycle camp and walk-in campground facilities at a location north of the day use parking lot. Consider alternative forms of camp facilities, such as yurts, and provisions to serve touring bicyclists along Highway 1.
  - Evaluate the potential for redesign of existing RDO facility locations to develop a new ranger station for visitor contact, public safety, interpretation and operational needs, to address a potential increase in visitation and concentration of visitor activities.
  - Retain park staff residences for public safety and protection of public property.
  - Improve road and trail connections, when possible, between Highway 1 and the Nature and History Center. Consider acquisition of additional properties if available from willing sellers.
- Protect special status plant and wildlife habitats; conduct resource surveys and monitor use along roadways and near sensitive habitats; and implement resource management and protective measures to eliminate or mitigate human impacts on significant natural resources.
- Evaluate and rehabilitate, as appropriate, the Nature and History Center building, parking and support facilities, to serve as the primary interpretive center for RDO.



RDO Nature trail



RDO Nature & History Center

ZONE	INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION	RECREATION & PARK FACILITIES	NATURAL RESOURCES	CULTURAL RESOURCES
<div><h3>Wilderness and Backcountry</h3><p>The State Wilderness and Backcountry areas encompass the largest portion (85%) of the park.</p><p>54% Backcountry (10,540 acres)</p><p>31% Wilderness (5,904 acres)</p><p>Remaining 15% includes HQ, RDO, Saddle Mtn. and Little Basin areas</p></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Enhance interpretation of the wilderness and backcountry to strengthen park resource protection and visitor enjoyment of wilderness and backcountry areas.</li><li>▪ Take advantage of ridge trails and vista points in the backcountry for focused interpretation of Santa Cruz Mountains and coastal history, from prehistoric times to the present.</li><li>▪ Consider offering scheduled shuttle interpretive tours of backcountry areas using existing fire roads. These tours could also visit other park units in the Santa Cruz Mountains and offer an overview of the area’s geology, wildlife, and plant communities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Expand recreation opportunities, where appropriate, while preserving the undeveloped character of the wilderness and backcountry areas.</li><li>▪ Expand the State Wilderness to include approximately 390 acres of additional lands north up to Gazos Creek Road and Whitehouse Canyon Road. The proposed wilderness boundary will be setback 50 ft from the San Mateo County’s right-of-way on Gazos Creek Road and 50 ft from the edge of park roads and trails that define the limits of the state wilderness.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Preserve natural resource values and continue to provide opportunities for compatible recreation activities.</li><li>▪ Continue best management practices to protect native plants and wildlife habitats, cultural sites and features, while allowing for continued public access.</li><li>▪ Increase ranger patrols in the backcountry, to manage use and minimize resource impacts. Monitor public use and its effects on resource management and protection – reduce adverse impacts or modify uses.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete resource inventories and prepare management plans for long-term protection and interpretation of significant cultural resources.</li></ul>



Wilderness and Backcountry  
(Continued)



Berry Creek Falls

- Provide additional remote interpretation; for example, additional podcasts, web-based activities, and PORTS (Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students) programs.

- Improve trailhead parking and trailside camps for access into the backcountry. Develop additional loop trails, where feasible, for hikers and equestrians, and establish sustainable creek crossings and drainages to reduce erosion and stream sedimentation.
- Consider additional authorized bicycle use of the backcountry, with trailhead parking, trail camps, and regional trail connections. Support the goal for a continuous multi-use trail from the ridge tops to the coast (outside of the state wilderness) with support facilities. Investigate possible routes, including existing roads and trail modifications such as a realignment of the McCrary Ridge trail that may include a minor adjustment of the state wilderness boundary.
- Maintain a bicycle corridor on the existing roadway along West Waddell Creek from the south; also serves for authorized emergency and patrol vehicle access to remote areas of the park.
- Consider limited / seasonal opportunities for auto tour concession on backcountry roads, where appropriate.

- Protect known wildlife habitat linkages to permit movement of fish and wildlife and to increase species abundance and diversity.



Skyline to the Sea Trail